

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method of removing a liquid from at least one surface of at least one substrate comprising the steps of:

subjecting said substrate to a rotary movement;

supplying a liquid on at least a part of said surface of said substrate; and

locally heating said liquid on said part of said surface to remove at least a portion of said liquid and create at a liquid ambient front, such that a sharply defined liquid-ambient boundary is created, at least locally, while subjecting said substrate to said rotary movement and supplying said liquid, said liquid-ambient boundary separating a liquid-covered region and a liquid-removed region on said substrate,

wherein said rotary movement is performed at a speed to guide the sharply defined liquid-ambient boundary over the substrate.

2-3. (canceled)

4. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said rotary movement is applied to a single substrate such that said substrate rotates around its own center.

5. (original) A method as in claim 4, wherein the rotation speed is in the range from 2 to 40 revolutions per second.

6. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said heating is accomplished by one of dispensing a heated gas; dispensing a heated vapor; and dispensing a heated mixture of a gas and a vapor.

7. (canceled)

8. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said liquid comprises one of an etching liquid, a cleaning liquid and a rinsing liquid.

9. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said liquid comprises a dilute aqueous solution.

10. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 8, wherein said cleaning liquid comprises one of a mixture of NH₄OH, H₂O₂ and H₂O; a mixture of HCl, H₂O₂ and H₂O; diluted HCl; and a mixture comprising O₃.

11. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 8, wherein said rinsing liquid comprises one of H₂O; and a mixture of H₂O and an acid, said mixture having a pH between 2 and 6.

12. (currently amended) A method of removing a liquid from a first surface and a second surface of at least one substrate comprising the steps of:

subjecting said substrate to a rotary movement;

supplying a liquid on at least a part of said first side-surface and at least a part of said second side-surface of said substrate; and

locally heating said liquid on said part of said first surface and on said part of said second surface to remove at least a portion of ~~while supplying~~ said liquid, such that the surface tension of said liquid is locally reduced due to a surface tension gradient being formed in the liquid, the gradient being in a direction away from a sharply defined liquid-ambient boundary that is created, at least locally, during the steps of subjecting said substrate to a rotary movement, locally heating and supplying said liquid, said liquid-ambient boundary separating a liquid-covered region and a liquid-removed region on said substrate, and

wherein said rotary movement is performed at a speed to guide the sharply defined liquid-ambient boundary over the substrate.

13. (currently amended) An apparatus for removing a liquid from at least one surface of at least one substrate, said apparatus comprising:

a substrate holder which is subjectable to a rotary movement, said substrate being releasably held by said substrate holder;

at least one liquid supply system for applying a liquid on at least a part of said surface of said substrate;

at least one heat source for locally heating and removing at least a portion of said liquid; and said heat source and said liquid supply system being positioned such that said heating is applied closer to the center of said rotary movement of said substrate holder than said liquid and wherein said heat source and said liquid are positioned such that, at least locally, a sharply defined

liquid-ambient boundary is created on said surface of said substrate, said liquid-ambient boundary separating a liquid-covered region and a liquid-removed region on said substrate.

14. (previously presented) An apparatus as recited in claim 13, further comprising a chamber wherein said substrate holder is positioned, said chamber being designed in a manner to avoid back splashing of said liquid onto said surface of said substrate.

15. (previously presented) An apparatus as recited in claim 13, wherein said heating source comprises at least one nozzle for dispensing one of a heated gas; a heated vapor; and a heated mixture of a vapor and a gas onto said surface of said substrate, and said liquid supply system comprises at least one nozzle for applying said liquid on said part of said surface of said substrate, said nozzles are positioned such that said heating is applied closer to the center of the rotary movement of the substrate holder than said liquid.

16. (original) An apparatus as recited in claim 15, where said nozzles are mounted on an arm, said arm being movable relative to said substrate holder.

17. (canceled)

18. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein said liquid is supplied within said liquid-covered region of said liquid-ambient boundary.